

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6308

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3413

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IR

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON CABINET CHANGES

REF: TEHRAN 3368

1. DURING COURSE OF AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA APRIL 30 (TEHRAN 3397) LATER SHED ADDITIONAL LIGHT ON RECENT CABINET RESHUFFLE. HE COMMENTED JOCULARLY THAT IT WAS A GOOD THING TO SHAKE THINGS UP OCCASIONALLY AND WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE REORGANIZATION WAS INTENDED TO BRING GREATER EFFICIENCY TO GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS IN ALL FIELDS. HE SAID FORMER MINISTER OF FINANCE AMOUZEGAR (NOW MINISTER OF INTERIOR) WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CARRYING OUT SHAH'S DESIRE TO DECENTRALIZE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE TO OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, REVERSING GRAVITATION TO TEHRAN. AMOUZEGAR WAS CHOSEN FOR THIS ROLE BECAUSE "TECHNOCRATS WERE MORE ABLE TO ACT WITH A STEEL FIST THAN POLITICIANS WHO MUST WEAR A VELVET GLOVE." HE ALSO CONFIRMED STORY HEARD ELSEWHERE THAT AMOUZEGAR WOULD CONTINUE HIS OPEC RESPONSIBILITIES, NOTING THAT AMOUZEGAR WAS MINISTER MOST FAMILIAR WITH WELL ESTABLISHED GOI OIL POLICY.

2. COMMENTING ON ANOTHER ASPECT OF CABINET REORGANIZATION THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE NEW MINISTER OF WELFARE WOULD BE
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RESPONSIBLE FOR PULLING TOGETHER AND RATIONALIZING THE MULTITUDINOUS

GOVERNMENT AID AND WELFARE PROGRAMS TO WORKERS, THE BLIND, SICK AND HALT. THE INTENTION WAS TO INSURE THAT DUPLICATION OF EFFORT NOW SUSPECTED IN CERTAIN INSTANCES WAS ELIMINATED AND THAT AID REACHED INTENDED RECIPIENTS.

3. BASIC TENOR OF PM'S REMARKS SUBSTANTIATED PRESS REPORTS THAT PURPOSE OF CABINET REORGANIZATION WAS TO GROUP MINISTERIAL ACTIVITY AND RESPONSIBILITY INTO FOUR GENERAL AREAS--ECONOMICS, WELFARE, EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION--AND PLACE EACH UNDER MANAGEMENT CONTROL OF SINGLE DESIGNATED MINISTER FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY. HUSHANG ANSARY WILL HEAD UP ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL GROUP; JAMSHID AMOUZEGAR ADMINISTRATION; ABDOL MAJID MAJIDI WELFARE; AND PRIMIN HIMSELF EDUCATION. THEIR PRINCIPAL JOB WILL BE TO PLAN, COORDINATE AND ASSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS OF MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION. CONTRARY TO SOME PRESS REPORTS PRIMIN DOES NOT RPT NOT PLAN "SUPER-MINISTRIES"; MINISTERS IN EACH RELATED FIELD WILL REMAIN INDEPENDENT BUT LOOK TO DESIGNATED MINISTER FOR GUIDANCE AND DIRECTIONS.

4. COMMENT: NEW EMPHASIS ON GOVERNMENT DECENTRALIZATION AND DISPERSAL OF INDUSTRIES OUT OF TEHRAN FITS WITH CONCERN SHAH EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR A YEAR AGO THAT TEHRAN IS BECOMING TOO CONGESTED AND THAT WATER AND OTHER RESOURCES BECOMING OVERTAXED BY CONTINUING POPULATION AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH OF THE CITY. SELECTING ONE OF IRAN'S MOST ABLE AND DYNAMIC MINISTERS TO HEAD DECENTRALIZATION PROGRAM SUGGESTS SHAH IS DETERMINED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. IF SUCCESSFUL, THE PROGRAM WOULD DOUBTLESS ENHANCE WELLBEING OF PEOPLE IN PROVINCIAL AREAS IN PROVIDING INCREASED JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND SOCIAL SERVICES. IT COULD ALSO LEAD TO DIFFUSION OF POWER AND WEALTH PRESENTLY SO HEAVILY CONCENTRATED IN TEHRAN TO OVERALL BENEFIT OF THE COUNTRY.
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